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RR RUEHDBU RUEHPW  
DE RUEHBN #0068 1612214  
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FM AMCONSUL MELBOURNE  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 4949  
INFO RUCNAFG/AFGHANISTAN COLLECTIVE  
RUEHPT/AMCONSUL PERTH 1576  
RUEHDN/AMCONSUL SYDNEY 2098

C O N F I D E N T I A L MELBOURNE 000068

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/11/2019

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [AF](#) [AS](#)

SUBJECT: MELBOURNE BASED AFGHAN PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE  
WITHDRAWS

REF: A. STATE 59361 (NOTAL)

[1](#)B. MELBOURNE 56

[1](#)C. CANBERRA 283

[1](#)D. CANBERRA 278

Classified By: Justin L. Kolbeck for reason 1.4(b),(d)

Summary

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[1](#)1. (C) Abdul Khaliq Fazal, former Afghan Minister for Public Works (2001-2004), confirmed to post that he has withdrawn his candidacy for President of Afghanistan due to President Karzai's "dominant" position in the upcoming polls. End Summary.

Candidate Withdraws

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[1](#)2. (C) Abdul Khaliq Fazal confirmed to post on June 10 that he has decided not to run against President Karzai in the upcoming Afghan Presidential election. Fazal, who recently returned from Kabul, said he consulted with his advisers and decided that President Karzai's position was too dominant to mount a "realistic" campaign. According to Fazal, Governor Gul Agha Sherzai from Nangarhar, former Finance Minister Dr. Anwar ul-haq Ahadi, and former Interior Minister Ali Ahmad Jalali also decided to stand down their candidacies due to Karzai's relatively strong position.

[1](#)3. (C) Fazal perceived that Afghanistan's public infrastructure has moved backwards in the six months since he had last visited the country. He noted that recently constructed roads were in ruin, garbage was piling up and that traffic in Kabul has intensified. (Comment: As a former Public Works Minister, Fazal may have been motivated by a desire to express how much better things were during his tenure. End comment.)

Comment

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[1](#)4. (C) Fazal, who says that he maintains an ongoing relationship with President Karzai, said that he would consider Karzai's offer to be part of a future cabinet should Karzai be reelected. Fazal's previous heart condition and a well established business and extended family in Melbourne, however, mitigate the likelihood of his returning to public life in Afghanistan.

THURSTON